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On the medical texts written in old Anatolian Turkish

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Abstract

Old Anatolian Turkish contains rich examples of Turkish medical terms. Although the language of science during this period was Arabic, most of the medical texts were written in Old Anatolian Turkish or in pure Turkish. The reason for this seems to be that since medicine is one of the basic sciences dealing directly with individuals so that although dominant language for sciences of the period was Arabic, medical texts were mostly written in Turkish or translated from Arabic or Persian into Turkish to be understood by laymen. Therefore, the language of medical texts of the period provides us with invaluable source to get insights about historical characteristics of Turkish. Additionally, the other texts related to medicine have similar linguistic pattern, and these texts present a rich source of lexical items. Thus, medical texts and other related texts are significant sources for the studies on Turkish. Despite their importance, there is no dictionary concerning the Turkish medicine language. This study deals with the references that can be used to analyse the lexical items in the medical texts and provides examples of the lexical items used in medical texts written in Old Anatolian Turkish.

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1. Introduction

Many medical texts were produced in the Old Anatolian Turkish and these texts include a significant vocabulary repertoire. Medical texts mostly include medical terms, the names of the plants used in medication, terms related to human behavior, life, health-care and also, other terms regarding seasons, climate in regard to protection for health-care. On the other hand, the terms used in these texts are not completely different than those of daily life. The reason for this similarity is the fact that medicine is

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directly related to human beings and that diseases and health-care are part of human lives. Therefore, although the language of science at that period was Arabic, medical texts were written using a pure Anatolian Turkish to enable the readers to easily understand. Furthermore, some medical texts were translated from Arabic and Persian into Anatolian Turkish for the same goal. As stated earlier, these texts mostly include Turkish terms rather than Arabic, Persian and Greek terms. Such terms are given as follows: yan agrısı ‘sciatica’(MŞ, EM), karasu ‘glaucoa’ (Md.), dumagu ‘flu’ (EM), içi yörü- ‘diarrhea’ (EM), içi bağlan- ‘to be constipated’ (EM). As it is well-known these medical texts were written at the period when Karamanoğlu Mehmet Bey encouraged the use of Turkish in all usages. It can be another reason why these medical texts were written in a pure Anatolian Turkish. On the other hand, these medical texts provide us with a rich data in regard to the vocabulary of the Old Anatolian Turkish and medical genre of the period.

There are many term and vocabularies in these texts that cannot be found in other text types, like literary texts. Some of these terms and vocabularies are given as follows: segri- ‘vibrate, slightly move, twitch’ (MŞ), gegir- ‘burp’ (EM, MŞ), kavuk ‘bladder, vessica’ (EM, MŞ, MNm., OM), kemürdek ‘cartilage’ (OM), kırkırdak ‘cartilage’ (OM), kırkırdak ‘cartilage’ (OM), ilik ‘marrow’ (MŞ, OM), ilük (ay.) (EM), sidük ‘urine’ (EM, MŞ, MNm.), irin ‘pus’ (MŞ, Md.), onurga ‘spine’ (MŞ, Md.), öyken ‘lung’ (EM, MŞ, MNm., Md., OM), eyegü ‘rib’ (EM, MŞ), sinür- ‘digest’ (EM, MŞ, OM), dumagu ‘flu, grippe’ (EM), tomagı ‘ay.’ (MŞ).

As stated earlier, in medical texts the terms used are also used in daily life. Therefore, the common way to produce terms in medical texts is to use daily life words that is one of the ways of generating terms.(Zülfikar 1991: 173) The following terms are examples for this trend: yangun ‘fever’ (MŞ, Md.), yüklü ‘pregnant’ (MŞ, EM, OM), isilik ‘1. fever; 2. One of four characteristics of substances in accordance with the earliest medical approach, temperature’ (EM, MŞ), ince ağrı ‘tuberculosis’ (MŞ, EM), depreşdür- ‘relapse’ (MŞ), götürün- ‘using wick or similar medication’ (MŞ, EM), gönül dön- ‘be nauseated’ (MŞ, OM). These examples clearly show that the language of science is not necessarily different from daily use of language and that Old Anatolian Turkish was the language of medical texts of the period.

Although these medical texts are significant in providing data concerning both vocabulary and text types of the related period, there is no medical dictionary, including the terms used in these medical texts. There is only one source that can be used, Screenin Glossary (TDK 1963-1972). On the other hand, the studies carried out on medical texts include dictionaries unique to the subject of the study such as Hacı Paşa Müntahab-ı Şifâ (Önler 1999), Kitâbü’l-Mühimmât (Özçelik 2001), Mehmed bin Ali, Terceme-i Cedide fi’l-Havâssi’l-Müfrede (Özaltay, Köse 2006), İshak bin Murad Edviye-i Müfrede (Canpolat, Önler 2007), Muhammed bin Mahmûd-ı Şirvânî Mürşid (Bayat 2004) and Tuhfe-i Murâdî (Argunşah 1999), Şirvanlı Mahmud Kemaliyye (Yelten 1993), Abdulvahhab bin Yusuf bin Ahmed el Mardânî Kitâbü’l-Müntehab fi’l-Tıbb, Bayat 2005), Eşref b. Muhammed, Hazâinü’l-Sa’âdât (İlhan 2009), Şerefeddin Sabuncuoğlu Mücerreb-Nâme (Küçük 2010). There is also no dictionary on plant names mentioned in the medical texts. However, such plants are still used either in their original labels or in phonologically modified labels. Botany dictionaries seem to be useful in to explain the medical terms directly or indirectly (i.e., Önler 1998: 162). Major dictionaries in this regard are as follows: Türkiye’de Bitkilerle Tedavi (Baytop 1986), Türkçe Bitki Adları Sözlüğü (Baytop 1994), Yabancı Bitkiler Sözlüğü I. Cilt (Tuncer 1978), Yabancı Bitkilerin Tıbbî İlaç Olarak Kullanılışları II. Cilt (Tuncer 1978).

2. Conclusion

The medical texts written in the Old Anatolian Turkish provides a rich data base in terms of both vocabulary and text types. However, only a few of these texts have been studied. If the medical texts are more frequently analysed, then we may find and reveal many other terms, words, patterns and language uses that are not included in literary works. Therefore, such texts should be analysed through tema work consisting of the related specialists.

Abbreviations

EM: İshak bin Murâd, Edviye-i Müfrede
 MŞ: Celalüddin Hızır (Hacı Paşa), Müntahab-ı Şifâ
 MNm.: Şerefeddin Sabuncuoğlu, Mücerreb-Nâme
 Md.: Muhammed bin Şîrvânî, Mürşid
 OM: Muhammed bin Mahmûd Şîrvânî, 15. Yüzyıl Osmanlı Mutfağı

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